

## MINUTES

Regular Meeting  
Cleveland County Water Board Room

February 10, 2026  
Tuesday, 6:00 P.M.

Present: Chairman Bill Cameron, Vice Chairman Amy Elliott Bridges, Secretary Tony Brooks, Commissioners Bruce Martin, Pamela P. Maddox and Pete Pedersen. Attorney Delton W. Barnes and General Manager Brad Cornwell were present.

Chairman Cameron called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM, welcomed all who were in attendance. Commissioner Bruce Martin gave the invocation, and Commissioner Pete Pedersen led the *Pledge of Allegiance*.

Brad Cornwell introduced Chief District Court Judge, Jeannette Reeves, for the swearing in of newly appointed Commissioner Dewey Cook. Mr. Cook introduced his friend in attendance. Judge Reeves conducted the oath with Mr. Cook.

### A. Approval of Agenda:

Chairman Cameron asked Commissioners if anyone had any questions related to the adoption of the agenda. Chairman Cameron requested a motion to adopt the agenda.

ACTION TAKEN: Upon a motion by Mr. Pedersen and second by Mrs. Maddox, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to accept the agenda.

### B. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

### C. Consent Agenda:

ACTION TAKEN: Chairman Cameron presented the Consent Agenda Items. Upon a motion by Mr. Brooks, second by Mrs. Bridges, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda. The Consent Agenda consisted of the following items:

- 1) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 13, 2026
- 2) Approval of the Closed Session Minutes of January 13, 2026

D. Unfinished Business:

1) Review and Discussion of the 2025 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report (Consumer Confidence Report or CCR)

Mr. Cornwell introduced Water Plant Superintendent/ORC, Garrett Gilbert, to discuss the 2025 Consumer Confidence Report. The consumer confidence report informs customers of every detail pertaining to the treatment of the water provided to the customers. This report is required and completed on a yearly basis. The report has a due date of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Cornwell noted that Mr. Gilbert would be sharing details of the CCR report because of the recent changes in the fluoride policy. The District customers are notified of the CCR completion with a note on their water bill. This bill note contains the information required to locate the report via the internet. Mr. Gilbert shared the CCR location in the commissioner meeting packet for reference. The report is approximately ten pages long and contains all testing results that have been completed during the last year or the past three years, depending on the requirements of the test. Mr. Gilbert noted that one of the mandates of the CCR report is that the web address must be shared with all characters provided. If the customer were to type in every character of the web address the CCR report would be there. There is also a quick link on our website that allows for easier accessibility. The State of North Carolina requires proof of the website address through sampling shared from our water billing. The State of North Carolina reviews the information and certifies the CCR report has been shared with the customers. The fluoride results are included in the inorganic contaminants section of the CCR report. Mr. Gilbert noted that the location of the fluoride results in the CCR report has been in the same location for several years. The CCR has reflected fluoride as ND (non-detect) for the corresponding years of 2023, 2024, and 2025. The last recordable fluoride range existed in the 2022 report. Non-detectable by definition is anything that is less than 0.1 parts per million. This information is public knowledge and readily available. Mr. Gilbert referenced a section in the CCR that allows for superintendent comments. This year's CCR contains a paragraph concerning the recent fluoride policy changes. The contact information for questions or concerns is in the CCR report for reference. The report is scheduled for release in the billing starting with the February water bills. Once all billing cycles have been completed, the customer proofs will be shared with the State of North Carolina for certification. Mr. Cornwell

requested that the members review the paragraph and share any questions or concerns.

- 1) Consideration of Resolution Number 3-2026 A Resolution Rejecting All Bids for the Stagecoach Greenway Along SR 1004 (Casar-Lawndale Road) Between Grigg Street and Maple Creek Project, Revision the Plans and Scope and Rebidding the Project

Mr. Cornwell provided some history concerning the project. The first bid presentation didn't have the required number of bidders for the project. The second bidding was in the amount of \$4.4 million, this amount was over the estimated engineering budget amount. The low bid contractor and District staff communicated about changing the scope and attempts at cost savings. Discussions were had concerning grading and dirt, the boardwalk materials and traffic control during construction. The decision was made that the most appropriate action would be to reject all the bids for the project and make modifications to the scope of the project. Mr. Cornwell shared that the Lawndale campus has a very large fill dirt pile that could be used in this project or used for other purposes. This fill dirt was left over from the raw water holding pond project. The dirt would require testing, certification, and erosion control measures. A modification could be designed for the boardwalk and bid that as a plan alternate. The traffic concern could also be modified because the NC DOT standards have changed and could be potential cost savings. This resolution would reject all the bids and make modifications to the plan as discussed. Mr. Cameron inquired about the fencing being modified. Mr. Cornwell responded that fencing was not a required element to the project. The fencing is designed to keep the public safe while at the Greenway. The fencing specifications would remain the same and not be included in the modifications of the scope. Mr. Martin asked for a time frame for the modifications to be completed. Mr. Cornwell shared that the modification process would take at least thirty days. Mr. Brooks inquired about how the contractors would be notified of the rejected bids. Mr. Cornwell noted that the engineer would communicate the rejected bids to the contractors. Mr. Cameron asked if the grant funds had any upcoming expirations dates. Mr. Cornwell shared that the \$1,000,000.00 grant from the NC Office of State Budget and Management has an expiration date of June 30, 2026. Mr. Cornwell is in communication with Senator Ted Alexander concerning an extension for those grant funds. Mr. Alexander

shared that several entities were awarded grants and have the same issues.

*ACTION TAKEN: Upon a motion by Mr. Pedersen, second by Mr. Brooks, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to adopt Resolution Number 3-2026 A Resolution Rejecting All Bids for the Stagecoach Greenway Along SR 1004 (Casar-Lawndale Road) Between Grigg Street and Maple Creek Project, Revising the Plans and Scope and Rebidding the Project*

E. New Business:

- 1) Consideration of Resolution Number 4-2026 A Resolution Authorizing Submission of a Funding Application to North Carolina Division of Water Infrastructure for a Drinking Water System Resiliency Project

Mr. Cornwell shared that last week the northern end of Cleveland County was affected by two main line breaks on Casar Lawndale Road. There was some negative publicity concerning the customers with low pressure. This prompted Mr. Cornwell, Alan Willis, and Garrett Gilbert to discuss a plan for future situations occurring in the Casar area. The State of North Carolina has created several different funding options because of the tragedy of Hurricane Helene. One of these funding options has been named the Hurricane Helene resiliency project. This funding would assist with construction that would improve situations directly in flood plains. This project would not be directly related to a flood plain but would replace some of the older eight-inch water lines between the Ivester Pump Station and the Town of Casar. A 13,500-foot section of water line exists in this area that is approximately fifty years old. This section of pipe would be upgraded from the current eight-inch size and increased to a twelve-inch size. The population in the Casar area has increased dramatically since the original water lines were installed. This area is partly fed by one water tank, located in Dirty Ankle. It is a ground storage tank that holds 250,000 gallons of water. The remaining area does not have a corresponding water tank. A map was shared with color coded areas indicating tank coverage. The project funding available for a drinking water project is \$10,000,000. The stipulation of this funding would be that the first \$5,000,000 would be deemed as grant funds and between five and ten million is 50% grant money. This project would include the construction of a new water tank in the Casar area and the installation of the upgraded water line replacements. Mr. Cornwell shared some of the history and details about the Moriah Tank. The Moriah Tank is

in the Moriah area, close to Moriah School Road and Moriah Church Road. The tank holds 30,000 gallons of water. It was constructed in 1983 as fire protection for the sawmill. The tank has a history of being problematic and the status of online or offline is often unsure. The construction of a 500,000-gallon elevated storage tank would allow this area to be zoned separately from the Bald Mountain Tank located in Dirty Ankle. This tank would allow for better fire flow and line pressure during times of need. It would assist Casar Elementary School in providing water during outages. Mr. Cornwell shared a map with members showing the distance between the Lower Bald Mountain Tank and Casar. This is a large area depending on a small 250,000-storage tank. The new elevated tank construction, if built tall enough, would allow the elimination of the current Moriah Tank. This resolution would allow for the application to be completed and submitted for consideration. Mr. Martin questioned the site of the new water tank. Mr. Cornwell answered that the stars on the map represent two locations that are ground elevation of 1140 feet above sea level. The locations are the Casar Volunteer Fire Department and the Casar Elementary School. The owners of both locations will consider land opportunities if the grant application is approved. Mr. Cameron asked if this project would eliminate the Bald Mountain Tank. Mr. Cornwell replied that the Bald Mountain Tank would remain in service.

*ACTION TAKEN: Upon a motion by Mr. Martin, second by Mrs. Bridges, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to adopt Resolution Number 4-2026 A Resolution Authorizing Submission of a Funding Application to North Carolina Division of Water Infrastructure for a Drinking Water System Resiliency Project*

**F. General Manager's Report:**

Mr. Cornwell introduced Ginger Fern, Finance Director, to share the finance report. Mrs. Fern began with the revenues. The property tax receipts are strong so far. The local options sales tax for January was not received. Mrs. Fern will be following up with the County for an update. The expenses reflected an item that was budgeted for capital for eight butterfly valve replacements for the filters at the water plant in Lawndale. The USEDA application for the Boiling Springs Tank has been completed. Hillary Sherman has been the contact for the application project. The application is now in a holding pattern, and the application will be through several review steps. Mrs. Fern called for questions or comments. Michelle Alexander,

Customer Service Director, continued with the disconnection and billing update. The January billing included 23,402 accounts for 119,815,662 gallons. There was a 17.4% water usage increase from December and a 10.7% increase from November. There have been no disconnections because of the winter weather conditions. The February disconnections will begin with Cycle 1 on Monday. There have been 177 customer leak calls and 35 leak adjustments in the amount of \$6,504.52. There were 80 KIOSK payments in January for a total of \$3,145.17. The credit card company has changed their credit card processor. This change was made to improve the authentication on the backside of the payment process. This change has been causing problems with customer credit cards being declined. This process has been halted for now to conduct further testing and troubleshooting. This process will resume later after improvements have been made. Customers see their payments in a pending status on their bank account. These transactions will hopefully be corrected in five to seven business days. Mr. Brooks asked for an approximate amount of customer effected. Mrs. Alexander shared that currently 305 autopay customers are showing in the pending status. This customer count may be higher than actual because customers are making multiple attempts in the hopes of the payment processing. If the members hear from any customers, please share Mrs. Alexander's information with them for reporting and corrections. Mr. Cornwell introduced Chris Hayes, Project Manager, to share the project update. Mr. Hayes began with the Polkville Tank and Booster Pump Station. The filling of the new water tank has begun. A water sample will be collected from the tank and tested accordingly once the tank has been filled. This process will complete the tank construction process. The pump station is waiting for the drive to be installed for the safety switches. The Waco Pump Station had the startup completed on February 6, 2026. There are a couple of adjustments to be made for the SCADA system communication to the water plant in Lawndale. The walk through with the contractor for the pump station will be scheduled in a couple of months. The installation of the sixteen-inch waterline for the Hendrick Lake water line improvements is progressing quickly. Approximately 7,300 feet of 17,000 feet of waterline have already been installed in a month and a half time. The generators for the telemetry at Lattimore, Jesse Mountain, and Hendrick Lake tanks have been installed. The water lines are being installed at the R-4045 Mooresboro Interchange. The NCDOT has hit the existing water lines a couple of different times over the last couple of weeks. The board retreat is scheduled for February 21, 2026. Breakfast is scheduled to begin at 8:00 a.m. and

snacks will be available. The meeting will begin at 8:30, the agenda will consist of the projects that have been completed and accomplished from the old Capital Improvements Project list. Shannon Moore from Withers & Ravenel will be on-site to share information about system development fees and allocating fees based on system development. No action will be required on this presentation at the retreat. The action for this study has requirements and guidelines that will need to be followed in accordance with the NC General Statutes. The new Capital Improvement Project list will be discussed. The rate analysis will be discussed, incorporating the new development fees into the new water rates. This process will also take into consideration the debt that is added to construct the new Broad River Water Treatment Plant. Mr. Cornwell reminded members that a resolution was approved four years ago to install an ATM machine on the grounds of the New Operations Center in Shelby. The State Employees Credit Union will be visiting the site and scheduling the installation soon. Mr. Cornwell shared that most of the State of North Carolina is classified in drought conditions. Since November 1, 2025, our area of North Carolina is below normal by 6.55 inches of rain. Our area is nine inches below normal if the entire year of 2025 is included in the deficit. The river is low. The snow recharges the water table but there were a couple of water systems that began voluntary water restrictions recently.

#### G. Board Members Announcement and Remarks

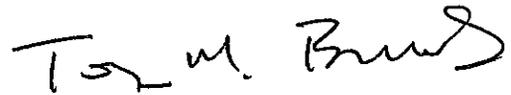
Mr. Brooks shared that he had seen the bank building advertisements in the Cleveland County Chamber newsletter. He inquired about the lease applications for the Stagecoach Greenway bank building. Mr. Cornwell shared his experiences with recent telephone calls concerning the bank building. No official proposals have been received for the space. Mr. Pedersen inquired about the number of customers affected by the Casar Lawndale Road main line outages. Mr. Cornwell noted that approximately 1,200 customers were affected. Mr. Pedersen asked if there was a way to inform the public concerning problems. Mr. Cornwell provided some clarification concerning the customers' low-pressure issues not outages. Mr. Cornwell noted that the first main break occurred after peak demand and crews worked all night to restore services. The second main break occurred the very next morning and the office was open shortly after that time for the customers. Chairman Cameron asked for announcements and remarks. Mr.

Cook noted that he was glad to be back on with the board. Members' noted appreciation for everything being done in service to the District .

I. Adjournment

Action Taken: Chairman Cameron called for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion by Mr. Pedersen, second by Mrs. Maddox, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Tony Brooks, Secretary

